



National Institute of Justice

S o l i c i t a t i o n

Jeremy Travis, Director

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Solicitation for Research and Evaluation on Corrections and Sentencing (1999)

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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street NW
Washington, DC 20531

Janet Reno
Attorney General

Raymond C. Fisher
Associate Attorney General

Laurie Robinson
Assistant Attorney General

Noel Brennan
Deputy Assistant Attorney General

Jeremy Travis
Director, National Institute of Justice

For grant and funding information please contact:
Department of Justice Response Center:
800-421-6770

Office of Justice Programs
World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

National Institute of Justice
World Wide Web Site:
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Solicitation for Research and Evaluation on Corrections and Sentencing (1999)

I. Introduction

In collaboration with the Office of Justice Programs (OJP)/ Corrections Program Office (CPO), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is seeking proposals to conduct research on the implementation and impact of the Violent Offender Incarceration and Truth-in-Sentencing Acts (Title II, Subtitle A) of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, as amended.

In FY 96, FY 97, and FY 98, NIJ issued solicitations for proposals to evaluate and research sentencing reforms and their effects on corrections. Each of these solicitations encouraged proposals for projects of three types: Impact Evaluations, Topical Research and Evaluation, and Practitioner-Researcher Partnerships. Additionally, a national evaluation of the primary sentencing initiatives in the Crime Act, including Truth in Sentencing and Violent Offender Incarceration, was funded.

In addition to the study of areas funded in earlier years, FY 99 appropriations may be applied to the consideration of offender programs for drug testing-interdiction and treatment for appropriate categories of convicted offenders during periods of incarceration, post-incarceration, and criminal justice supervision.

This fourth year of funding will support up to \$1,500,000 in projects. Applications are sought for correctional management studies, drug testing-interdiction and sanctioning research projects, and practitioner-initiated research partnerships that will contribute to the understanding of the impact and effectiveness of State and local correctional issues and sentencing initiatives that are generalizable. Proposals should not overlook the impacts that the

implementation of Violent Offender Incarceration (VOI) and Truth-in-Sentencing (TIS) have had on public safety on public confidence in the criminal justice system. Further details are provided below.

II. Background

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the Act), as amended, has advanced a multifaceted approach to violent crime, including changes in Federal penalties for crimes and incentive programs for State and local jurisdictions. Under Title II, Subtitle A, of the Act, most State and local correctional systems received Violent Offender Incarceration and Truth-in-Sentencing Incentive (VOI/TIS) Grant funds in FY 96 and FY 97. Additional funds were distributed in FY 98. These funds were used to expand capacity to incarcerate violent offenders with more certainty and to ensure that at least 85 percent of the length of each sentence for Uniform Crime Report Part I violent crimes is actually served. Provisions for authorization of grants to Native American Tribes to construct correctional facilities on tribal lands are also authorized under this Act. A provision added with the FY 97 appropriation requires States to have a program of drug testing-interdiction, treatment, and sanctions to receive funding in FY 99 and beyond (PL 104-208, 110 Stat. 3009, H.R. 3610), as well as a baseline data reporting program to measure the impact of random testing procedures.

The CPO administers the VOI/TIS grant program. The VOI/TIS grant program provides funds for States to undertake correctional expansion to increase the likelihood that a convicted violent offender will serve time in prison and that time served as a fraction of sentence length will be increased. Funds can be

used to build or expand correctional facilities for violent offenders or for non-violent offenders to free space for violent offenders. Funds may also be used for privatization to meet these purposes.

Grants for construction of correctional facilities on tribal lands are available from CPO to Native American Tribes to address the shortage of adequate correctional facilities on tribal lands. Most existing detention facilities are 20 to 30 years old and do not meet standards for accreditation. The concurrent jurisdiction that tribes share with the Federal courts allows tribes to refer the most serious offenders to the U.S. attorneys for prosecution. U.S. attorneys are also responsible for prosecuting most felony and some misdemeanor crimes in Indian country. Tribal justice systems are generally the most appropriate institution for maintaining order in tribal communities, but tribal courts need access to adequate detention and correctional facilities on tribal lands to effectively address offenders' crimes.

Beginning in FY 99, up to 10 percent of the funds provided under Section 20104 of Subtitle C-Report on Streamlining Federal Prevention and Treatment Efforts may be allocated by States to offender drug testing- interdiction and treatment programs during periods of incarceration and post-incarceration criminal justice supervision. This provision allows for an expansion of research in the areas of drug testing-interdiction, sanctioning, and treatment.

A portion of the overall funds authorized under the VOI/TIS program has been set aside for NIJ to assess and evaluate the outcomes of the VOI/TIS program and research major issues in the area of corrections and sentencing that will improve the ability of State and local jurisdictions to achieve program goals.

During FY 98 in collaboration with CPO, NIJ undertook an initiative to develop more effective partnerships with State- and local-level

practitioners and researchers in an effort to examine issues of mutual concern collaboratively and to develop beneficial solutions. The Corrections and Sentencing Partnership Workshop provided a forum for the discussion of effective partnership issues.

In collaboration with CPO and in consultation with correctional practitioners, sentencing policymakers, and researchers, NIJ continues to identify key research questions and policy needs that should be addressed by the research community in order to maximize the lessons learned from projects funded under the Crime Act and to provide feedback on strategies for addressing changes in sentencing policy to State and local jurisdictions. The following section identifies the areas of research and evaluation that are of interest to NIJ and CPO.

III. Areas of Research Required

For some citizens, sentencing policy and correctional practices have failed to meet expectations. In response, Federal and State governments enacted various legislation. The VOI/TIS program is intended to restore integrity to the sentencing process by increasing the likelihood that a convicted violent offender will serve time in prison and that time served as a fraction of sentence length will increase.

New public policy questions about correctional programs and sentencing arise every year. This solicitation seeks to develop knowledge about correctional policy and practice and sentencing issues. Proposals are sought in the following areas: (A) correctional management-related research resulting from the implementation of the VOI/TIS program; (B) drug interdiction, testing, sanctions and treatment; and (C) practitioner-initiated research partnerships that will stimulate the formation of lasting partnerships to address important questions related to corrections and sentencing policy.

A. Correctional Management Related Research

Many State legislators are concerned that changes in sentencing policy such as "three strikes" or "truth in sentencing" will result in runaway costs that will severely affect the State's ability to manage correctional facilities. Managing increased numbers of offenders due to changes in sentencing and release policies is also a concern of corrections policymakers and practitioners.

A potential impact of VOI/TIS legislation is on the management and organization of correctional facilities. Because of changes in prisoner flow resulting from legislation and the prevailing 'do more with less' atmosphere in many State, local and Tribal jurisdictions, correctional facilities have had to undergo major changes in both management philosophy and organizational structure.

As increases in the nation's prisons and jails continue to intensify, the private sector is increasingly viewed as a viable option to help provide correctional services. "Super max" facilities are also used as a form of custodial care to manage violent offender populations. Many issues continue to be unresolved when implementing the operation of these management concepts.

Research proposals are being solicited that will examine the organization and management of correctional facilities, and measure the impact of changes in policies resulting from these new laws.

Funded studies should be comparative, and the research should encompass several methodologies. The proposed research should be developed across States with different sentencing structures (including both TIS and non-TIS) and should include different correctional facility types (e.g., State and local).

Potential research questions include but are not limited to the following:

- What issues are involved in implementing and operating "super-max" facilities for difficult-to-manage offenders? Research that describes these prisons in terms of their numbers, operations and programs, staffing patterns, costs, and roles within the larger correctional systems is desirable. Special attention should be given to the management issues related to; a) the types of offenders in "super max" facilities; b) the inmate classification, intake, transfer, and release processes and mechanisms in these facilities; and c) the cost-effectiveness of these facilities in terms of their impacts on levels of prison violence, safety, and inmate recidivism.
- What changes in correctional strategies have been employed to address issues related to prison gangs and other so called "threat groups" in prisons? How have these strategies been implemented and what are their impact?
- What methods or strategies are being implemented to deal with an increasing number of violent youthful offenders entering many adult prison systems? How effective have these strategies been?
- What methods or strategies are being implemented in correctional facilities to deal with an increasing number of special populations resulting from changes in the sentencing process? How effective have these strategies been? Special populations of concern include but are not limited to:
 - women offenders;
 - mentally disabled offenders;

- elderly offenders; and
- life without parole offenders.

Each of these populations has separate needs, and consideration should be given to those issues associated with populations serving longer sentences, mandatory sentences, and life sentences.

- How have correctional managers responded to the religious freedom issues raised by special populations in prisons, especially Native Americans?

B. Drug Interdiction, Testing, Sanctions, and Treatment

Given the legislative amendment to the Crime Act regarding this area, NIJ is interested in exploring issues associated with the drug interdiction, testing, sanctioning, and treatment of offenders both during and after correctional placement.

This legislative addition permits NIJ and CPO to fund research in these additional related areas **employing a broad definition of drug treatment**, more inclusive than that used in the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners (RSAT) Research Program (also being conducted by NIJ in concert with the Corrections Program Office since FY 97). The RSAT research program supports process and a limited number of outcome evaluations of the RSAT - funded drug treatment programs, modeled after the Therapeutic Community model.

This solicitation, however, is seeking research that examines States' experiences in developing, implementing, and managing interdiction, drug testing, sanctions, and the provision of drug treatment. This solicitation also seeks research that assesses the impact that these new drug mandates have on institutional management, and on post-release supervision of offenders re-entering the community.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to the following:

B-1. Interdiction, Testing, Sanctions, and Treatment in Corrections

- What types of interdiction technology are being used with offenders in either institutional or community corrections settings? What are the management and cost ramifications of various types of interdiction approaches? Are there efficiency or effectiveness benefits that accrue to certain approaches?
- How are States developing estimates of the prevalence of the extent of drug and alcohol problems in correctional facilities? How accurate are these as compared to extant measures, instruments or to each other?
- What types of technology or instruments being used to measure individual offenders' degree of drug and alcohol problems? How do these instruments compare to extant approaches? How are these instruments integrated into correctional practice?
- How effective are various sanctioning approaches dealing with drug and alcohol use by either offenders or correctional staff?
- What are the components of the various treatment types or models being delivered to offenders in correctional treatment and how effective are they?
- What is the impact of correctional drug treatment on post-release outcomes?
- How effective are various drug detection approaches used in prisons and the community, including the use of canines

and new drug testing systems and technologies?

B-2. Drug Treatment During Post-release Supervision

- How is integration of correctional and post-release related treatment being managed by corrections? How effective are various approaches?
- Do various organizational barriers exist in developing adequate linkages between institutional and post-release services, and how might these be ameliorated?

B-3. Re-integration of Drug Offenders into the Community.

Because nearly all offenders imprisoned by the States are returned to community life, prisoner re-entry is a critical step in the criminal justice process. The re-entry of offenders from imprisonment to community life is a complex situation and needs to involve a systematic approach. The offender, the offender's family and community, the victim, and society all need to be considered in the development of any management strategy designed for an offender entering community life.

- How are policies for management of drug treatment offenders returning to the community being developed and implemented? How successful are these management approaches? Do parole boards still exist or has some entity replaced their function?
- Who develops a re-entry management plan for drug offenders to be released to the community and what systems and/or components are included in this process? How successful are these re-entry plans?

- Can participation in drug treatment or other supportive programs be integrated into offender re-entry plans from prison?

C. Practitioner-Initiated Research Partnerships

An essential part of NIJ's overall evaluation strategy is the development of greater research and evaluation capacity within State and local correctional systems in order to increase data-driven decisionmaking and policy development. While rigorous topical research and evaluations conducted in other jurisdictions offer valuable insights for practitioners in correctional agencies across the country, they lack the contextual relevance of research and evaluation conducted on their own specific programs and policies.

NIJ encourages practitioners to develop and conduct research stemming from their own concerns and to generate research that will have relevancy to other State and local policymakers. These research initiatives may be conducted through in-house research departments, other organizations, or in collaboration with other State, private or academic researchers. The purpose of these NIJ-supported partnerships is to stimulate collaborative efforts that will develop into lasting productive relationships.

The topics discussed under the headings above illustrate the research and evaluation that NIJ encourages for development in this section. Other research topics will be considered as long as these partnerships explore how State correctional and sentencing policies and practices are best implemented within the context of State or local agencies.

As the partners initiate a collaboration in the development of a proposal to NIJ, they should consider together these factors:

- What should your partnership look like?

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- How will your partnership be supported?
- What organizational, professional, and financial factors constitute a lasting relationship?
- How should the success of a partnership be measured over time?

Applicants must explain how their efforts will improve the understanding of the implementation or impacts of correctional and sentencing policies, both formal and informal.

Both sentencing and corrections partnerships can be formed. These partnerships may be newly formed in response to this solicitation or they may build on an existing relationship between researchers and practitioners. The applicant may be either the practitioner agency or the research agency or academic institution. Applications from jurisdictions of all sizes are encouraged.

A wide range of partnerships may be supported under this solicitation. State prison officials may wish to study new forms of programming for long-term offenders. Community-based corrections agencies might evaluate new ways of expanding prison capacity for violent offenders through special security programs for higher-risk offenders. A research organization may team with a sentencing commission to assess efforts to integrate intermediate sanctions within existing guidelines. Correctional and sentencing research partnerships may also include other relevant State or local government agencies or private service providers. It is critical that the application reflect a genuine collaboration between researchers and practitioners regardless of who may have initiated the effort, and should focus on helping practitioners develop measurable outcomes of the success of their programs and strategies. The application must clearly demonstrate a commitment to the partnership on the part of all parties involved.

Funding under this section is intended to support the establishment of the partnerships, the collaborative development of a policy relevant research agenda, the development of measurable indicators of program accomplishments (especially those that can become integral parts of correctional agency operations), and the completion of at least one collaborative research project. The application must include a task outline that includes a schedule for the completion of the key tasks over the course of the project.

The project should include one or more questions or issues to be addressed through the partnership. The completion of a specific research or evaluation effort is required. Documentation of the development of the partnership is critical. Therefore, the application must include a plan to create a system to record the establishment, development, and achievement of the research collaboration.

Also, proposals should indicate how the partnership is anticipated to continue at the conclusion of Federal funding. Existing partnerships or collaborations should make clear the additional benefits to be derived from Federal support, as NIJ monies are expected to fund new activities and not to supplement current research and evaluation resources.

Under this section of this solicitation, the Institute will award each grant totaling no more than \$60,000.00. Funding will be provided for up to 18 months.

IV. How to Apply

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain application forms and guides for completing proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for consideration:

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- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Budget Narrative
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax
- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Program narrative or technical proposal
- Privacy certificate
- References
- Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project
- Résumés
- Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications])

Proposal abstract. The proposal abstract, when read separately from the rest of the application, is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants must concisely describe the research goals and objectives, research design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Summaries of past accomplishments are to be avoided, and proprietary/confidential information is not to be included. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Use the following two headers:

Project Goals and Objectives:

Proposed Research Design and Methodology:

Page limit. The number of pages in the “Program Narrative” part of the proposal must not exceed **30 double-spaced pages**.

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on **June 30, 1999**. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

Award period. In general, NIJ limits its grants and cooperative agreements to a maximum period of 12 or 24 months. However, longer budget periods may be considered.

Applying. Two packets need to be obtained: (1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and (2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the web:
<http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#nij>
or the NIJ web site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>
These web sites offer the NIJ application forms and guidelines as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.
- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800–851–3420 or from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800–421–6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202–307–1480).
- Request copies by fax. Call 800–851–3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.

Guidance and information. Applicants who wish to receive additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800–421–6770. Center staff can provide assistance or refer applicants to an appropriate NIJ professional. Applicants may, for example, wish to discuss their prospective research topics with the NIJ professional staff.

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Send completed forms to:

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National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street NW
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

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National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
800-851-3420
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If you have any questions, call or e-mail NCJRS.